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**PROCEEDINGS**

# **Human-Animal Interaction: Impacting Multiple Species**



**October 20-25, 2009**

**Kansas City, MO USA**

**International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ)**

**18th Annual Conference**

**Oct. 20-23, 2009**



**Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction(ReCHAI)**

**1st Human Animal Interaction Conference**

**Oct. 22-25, 2009**



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**Poster-28**

**NIH Poster Presentation Session #1**

**Friday, October 22, 2009 4:45pm - 6:15pm**

## **NONVERBAL SENSITIVITY AND SUCCESS IN HUMAN-DOG INTERACTIONS**

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**Presenter:** Mrs. Iben Meyer

**Introduction:** Looking at different people interacting with dogs, it looks as though some human-dog interactions seem more successful than others. What is it that makes some people successful in their interaction with dogs and others less successful? Since communicating with dogs relies almost solely on nonverbal signals, especially for the dog-to-human part, a high sensitivity to nonverbal signals might improve a person's success with dogs, simply because being able to decode the signals of the dog makes it easier to adjust one's own behaviour accordingly. Earlier studies have shown that people who score high on the Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity (PONS)® test are rated as more popular among peers and more interpersonally sensitive than people with a lower score. The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between nonverbal sensitivity, ability to handle dogs and popularity among dogs.

**Methods:** A group of dog owners, attending a dog training class with their dog, will be taking the PONS® test. The test consists of 40 two-second long video clips of the same woman expressing different emotions. The video clips are without sound and show either the woman's face or her body from knees to neck. For each video clip, test subjects have to judge which of two real life situations is represented by the clip just seen. Test results will be used as a measure of the dog owners' ability to decode nonverbal signals. After the test, all test subjects will be asked to rate themselves and each other on different variables including 'ability to handle own and strange dogs' and 'popularity among dogs'. In addition, test subjects will be rated on the same variables by their trainer. Using statistical tools I will analyze the relationship between dog owners' nonverbal sensitivity, their ability to handle dogs and their popularity among dogs.

**Results:** Results will be discussed in relation to other findings within the field of nonverbal sensitivity and human-animal interactions. Learning more about the interaction between humans and dogs and how this interaction is affected by human personality, might be useful for future research on human-animal interaction as well as for the field of animal assisted activities.

**Conclusions:**